

## Turning Pro-Life Knowledge into Action

BY Joleigh Little

Just knowing that something is wrong, isn't enough. Think about it for a minute. Knowing that something is wrong won't make it stop.

My favorite pre-teen pro-lifer, James, pointed out recently that while 72% of 13- to 19-year-olds are pro-life (according to a 2003 Gallup poll), a much smaller percentage of that number is actively working to bring about an end to abortion and euthanasia. To his way of thinking, there's something wrong with that picture—more of them should be taking a stand. (And, honestly, when an 11-year-old approaches you with downloaded polling data in hand, it's time to stop and listen.)

My assistant from this summer also chimed in on the issue. When asked if she had any ideas for an NRL News article on youth, she immediately responded, "How about the importance of not being apathetic and sitting around doing nothing?"

Amanda, who at 20 already has five years of pro-life leadership experience under her belt, is also the president of her school's pro-life group. A group which, although it is located on a large Catholic college campus and boasts over 500 members, only has 10-20 people actively involved. (Apparently, this causes her some frustration.)

As James and Amanda know (and are not shy about reminding us) their peers understand that abortion is wrong, but they aren't standing up in large numbers to do something about it.

So what do we do? It may seem like a complex problem, but the solution is quite simple. We've realized over the past few years that education is not enough. Kids who know that abortion is wrong probably won't have one—that's the good news. But as with adults, there is frequently a gap between knowledge and action.

We need to take it to the next level. We have stressed the importance of pulling young people into the Movement, and of educating them on the facts of abortion and euthanasia. However, we also need to motivate them to take action.

One way is to help teens realize how directly the issue affects them. We can share with them that more than 3,500 abortions are performed every day in America, and that one-fourth of their generation has been aborted. Both of those things register on a "head" level.

In order to motivate teens to action, we need to reach them on a "heart" level. Remind them that there are empty chairs in THEIR classrooms because of abortion. That the children with whom they would have eaten lunch, played on sports teams, and exchanged text messages are gone in large numbers because of abortion.

They need to know that abortion has personally touched every one of them whether they know it or not. Many have lost brothers, sisters, and cousins to abortion—all have lost friends. Nearly every abortion statistic or fact has a personal tie-in for a generation that has lost so many. We just need to think a little bit—expend some creativity—to find it, and then share it with them!

Once they have been motivated, young pro-lifers also need to be activated. The only thing keeping a young man or woman from getting involved in your chapter could be three simple words: "Can you help?" And who better to ask those words than us—the adults who have been fighting this battle for decades?

Bottom line ... education is critical, but knowledge alone won't win the battle. Get out there and educate the youth in your community on the issue and then ask them to take action.

They may say "no," but many of them will say "yes" and in doing so become a part of something amazing that will save countless lives. It is you who can give them that chance!